

public lands; but the statement has been made on this floor and it is in this CONGRESSIONAL RECORD that underneath public non-national park public lands in the United States there is enough natural gas to heat every home in America for the next 150 years.

And we can drill it and we can tap into it, but we cannot build the roads and the collection system to deliver and distribute that gas because of other environmental infringements and obstructions. And so if we can do things to develop energy that are compatible with the environment, then we have to get away from this cult of environmental extremism, and we have got to get together here and save this economy from America and not commit this economic suicide of purchasing from our enemies, enriching our enemies so that they can buy weapons and hire terrorists and send those people to bomb us, but instead provide that independence for ourselves.

And that is the biggest piece about this energy that I think needs to be laid out here. If we can go at it on all fronts, and I think that the natural gas offshore would be the thing that would reduce the overall cost of the United States the most.

We sit here in the United States of America and the heartland of it and Mr. SHIMKUS and myself, in particular, are in the middle of the Corn Belt. And everything you raise takes nitrogen to produce it.

□ 1945

And we purchase nitrogen fertilizer. It takes more nitrogen for corn than any other crop that I know of. And 90 percent of the cost of that nitrogen fertilizer is the cost of the natural gas that is converted into that nitrogen fertilizer. We have nearly lost the fertilizer industry in America because we have not developed our natural gas in America. And that fertilizer industry is going offshore in places like Trinidad and Tobago, and those are American interests, and I am grateful for that. But they are also going to Venezuela and Russia. And we are sitting here paying \$15 for natural gas, and they are paying 95 cents in Russia so they can ship fertilizer to us. It will not be long, if we keep down this path, before the entire fertilizer industry is gone and we will see a fertilizer cartel pop up in Venezuela and Russia. And if you think it was a tough deal when you saw an oil cartel seek to control the price of crude oil and gasoline in America, think what it would be like if somebody has control over the cost of the production of our food in the United States of America.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to recap. I started out by addressing the President's State of the Union address, and he covered a lot of subject matter. We have addressed the energy intensively, and I do not think we mentioned that he addressed the initiative to develop ethanol out of cellulose. Wood chips, stalks and I think corn-

stalks, fiber like switch grass. There is a lot of energy there, and we are on the edge of being able to open up that technology. And if we accelerate that he believes, and I have no reason to disagree with his statement, that we could have ethanol production out of cellulose competitive with our current ethanol production within 6 years. That is good for all of us that can raise fiber of any kind. And it can convert waste products to put that in your gas tank at E85 levels, as Mr. SHIMKUS said. And I certainly support his initiative on clean coal, as the President spoke to that as well.

But the point that he made last night that has not been said here, the central point to his speech that I want to make, is that we fight to win in this War on Terror. And it is the most essential battle that we have as our national security. One of the things we are susceptible to, of course, with that is our dependence on that oil. We can get away from that, but we will still be threatened by our enemies from abroad.

We fight to win. We are winning. And the people on this side of the aisle stood and cheered when the President said that; the people on the other side of the aisle sat on their hands. And when the President said the decisions will be made on whether we deploy troops back out of Iraq by commanders in the field, not by politicians in Washington, D.C., people on this side of the aisle stood and cheered; people on the other side sat on their hands, Mr. Speaker. And when he said we stood behind our military, then we kind of got some support from both sides, but it was reluctant on the one side. And I wonder about that. I wonder what kind of sentiment would not be 100 percent behind every man and woman who wears a uniform and puts their life on the line for our freedom and for our safety. I think that is an absolute commitment that we have made. We have had that debate in this Congress. We have endorsed the President's authority to defend our interests in Iraq and around the world. He has done that. And I am grateful to every man and woman who has gone out there and put their lives on the line and those especially who have given their lives for our safety and our freedom.

It is going to be a long row to hoe to get to the end of this War on Terror. But the freedom that is coming in places like Afghanistan, the freedom that is coming in places like Iraq can be the lode star for a free Arab world. We never go to war against another free people, and to the extent that freedom can be promoted throughout the world, that is the extent by which all people on this globe are free from that curse of terrorism.

So I would ask us all to join together in that cause and let us open up this energy we have in this country so we are not hostage to those countries. Let us not enrich them. Let us enrich this economy here in the United States of

America and promote the freedom that comes from a free economy.

THE 30-SOMETHING WORKING GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MEEK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to come before the House of Representatives once again. I want to give a special thanks to Democratic leader NANCY PELOSI and also Democrat whip STENY HOYER and our chairman, Mr. JIM CLYBURN, for leading us in the way that Americans are now seeing that we are moving in the right direction.

Just today, Mr. Speaker, we had an election of Mr. JOHN LARSON, who has become the vice chairman of our caucus. We are continuing to move in this area of not only bright ideas about also a forward lean to make America stronger.

It is also a great day for us to reflect on where we have been and where we want to go as a country. And I think it is important to take note of what took place last night. We had the State of the Union address. We were all there. We paid very close attention to what the President had to say, the Commander in Chief, about his vision for this country. Also, some of the vision was embraced by all of us. Some of the vision was embraced by a few of us. And some of the vision that he was saying that he had we heard once before as a vision.

A reporter called me, Mr. Speaker, and asked me for a response to the President's address, and I had to scratch my head for a moment because it was a lot of what we heard in the past. Theme language. We have to get tough on them before they get tough on us, we heard that before. We have to fight them over there so we do not have to fight them here, we have heard that before. We have to stay the course, we have heard that before. A lot of themes, a lot of slogans. I think what the American people were looking for was some direction on where we are going to go and how we are going to get there, sending a very strong message to our young people, to our middle-aged people, and also to our seniors that are out there, also to our troops. And I think it is so very important that we pay very close attention to what our troops are learning and what they are hearing from this Congress and what they are not hearing as it relates to the direction that we are going on the stateside. When I say state, dealing with diplomats in Iraq and Afghanistan and other areas, and also as it relates to something as simple as body armor and also continued support for our troops.

Of course, I did not see anyone say that we do not support the troops. We

all support the troops. Every American supports the troops. I think it is important for us to understand that we have to make sure that they have what they need. And, Mr. Speaker, as you know, this 30-Something Working Group meets constantly to not only promote the ideas that are bipartisan in nature but also the ideas that on the Democratic side we want to share that not only with the majority side but also with the Americans, and I think it is important.

I think it is important for us to even look at issues as it relates to national security. We must stand behind the American military. That is what the President said. But I want to make sure that everyone understands, here on this side of the aisle and I would even say a couple of my friends on the majority side, Democrats were calling and have been calling for the last 3 years for implementing plans to strengthen and revitalize our overstretched military at this time. It is also important for us to understand that we have to be ready to fight other wars and other conflicts when they do arise, and we need to make sure that we are ready. We need to make sure we have Humvees. We have to make sure we have the body armor. We have to make sure that we have a clear task and mission so that our men and women know exactly what their purpose is, they know what their mission will be, and they know when they will be coming home. It is not a big secret to say when you are coming home. Maybe it is a secret as to when you are leaving to go to war, but when you are coming home is something that I think our troops need to know. We hear little words like, well, they just want to stop or they just want to cut and run or whatever the case may be. You can use your slogans, but what we are now seeing in the polling, Mr. Speaker, is that American people are saying, You have to be a little clearer with us on this. You just cannot say, well, stay the course, we will stay there as long as we need to be there. Well, that would be great. I am pretty sure many of our U.S. city mayors, many of whom just left town, Mr. Speaker, would love to hear, with our community development blocks grants or what they had with their COPS program that they no longer have the funding from the Federal Government. If the President were to say we are going to stay the course in those areas and make sure that we build small and big communities, that we are going to stay the course in making sure that police officers have the dollars they need to be able to get the things that they need to fight crime in communities and have afterschool programs, that we are going to stay the course, they would love to hear that. But fiscal responsibility and just simple common sense, Mr. Speaker, would say that you have to be able to set some benchmarks. You just cannot say I would like to spend billions of dollars and do not ask any questions and if you do, you are being a pessimist.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am so glad that Mr. RYAN has joined us, and it is so good to be back here in 2006 with the 30-Something Group once again.

I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, it is good to be back with the gentleman again.

I think the word that needs to be applied to this conversation is "accountability," and this is something that the 30-Somethings have talked about since we started. Being Democrats, we want to talk about accountability. We have a responsibility when we get the taxpayers' money that we are not just going to spend it and not ask any questions. And if the program is not working the way it is supposed to work, we are not for just throwing more money at the problem because that does not work. We want to talk about accountability.

But before we can even begin the conversation about accountability with programs and local communities, the COPS program, schools and everything else, there needs to be accountability here in this Chamber. And I believe that the Republican majority in the House and in the Senate and in the White House has really not been held accountable for what they have been doing. If you look at the budget deficits that we have right now, and the 30-Something Group cares about this because this is our generation that is going to have to foot the bill for this thing, \$500 billion more spent last year than we took in in tax revenue. So we borrow it from the Chinese, from the Saudi Arabians, from the Japanese. We have borrowed more money in the last 4 years, and Kendrick will show this, from 2000 to 2004.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I want Mr. RYAN to talk about this. I know it is a chart that I usually speak from, but he is making a valid point here and I think that the Members need to be able to see it.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I appreciate you sharing, and I bet when you were in grade school that your teachers put on there "Kendrick Meek plays well with others."

Mr. MEEK of Florida. And governs well with others, and that is something we want to do here in this Chamber on the majority side. We want to move in a bipartisan way.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. In the last 4 years, this President and the Republican House and the Republican Senate have borrowed more money, \$1.05 trillion, than any every other President before him and Congresses before this one in the last 224 years. We are borrowing money to give rich people a tax cut, period, dot. And when we talk about accountability, this is what we are talking about because this has long-term ramifications to our potential economic growth because the money we are spending to pay down

this debt and to pay the interest to the Chinese government is money that we are not investing into the COPS program, we are not investing into our veterans, we are not investing into research and development, we are not investing into making sure that every household has access to broadband communications. We are not investing that money into public venture capital that will lure private investment like they are doing in Israel, and they have a lot of innovative things going on in Ireland. These are the things that we need to do, but it all starts with balancing here in budget in the United States Congress.

Mr. MEEK has two beautiful kids. He cannot ask his kids to be responsible and then his example is to be irresponsible. It just does not work that way. He works hard and his kids see him work hard. So at the end of the day, they are going to learn a lesson from him.

I appreciate the gentleman's yielding to me. I appreciate his allowing me to use his chart because this has been his chart for the last few months.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Unfortunately, the burden has been the American burden, the American taxpayer.

Mr. Speaker, I must say that it is very important. Mr. RYAN was speaking about this whole honest leadership piece, and I think it is important. We know that we have some Members that have made some bad decisions, and we are not going focus on that, and past Members. People make mistakes. I am just going to fall on the side that people make mistakes.

□ 2000

But when you have institutions such as this one that is making mistakes that cost American taxpayer more money, that is when we have a problem.

Now, the good thing about this is in the next 9 months the American people will be able to make some decisions. It is something that we have in the U.S. Constitution. You know, when you come to the House all of us have to run every couple of years. I call it a time where we are judged by all of our constituents throughout this country.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. A job interview.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. It is a job interview. Thank you, Mr. RYAN. We need to write that down. It is a job interview, where you come, you are being interviewed by all of your constituents, and they are going to evaluate, is my Congressman doing everything that he or she can do to make sure that my life is better? A grandmother, is my Congressman or my Congresswoman doing what they should do to make sure that my children and grandchildren have better opportunities than what I had?

Is my Congressman or Congresswoman making sure that my health care costs are under control and that I have to with my prescription drugs choose between whether I am going to

eat or take my medication like I should? Do I have a community where we have a sound community? Is my Congress passing on unfunded mandates to my local government that I have to then pay additional taxes just for general services?

Those are going to be some of the questions that people are going to ask. Is my Congress playing a leadership role in the area of the culture, okay, Mr. RYAN, the culture of corruption and cronyism and incompetence that permeates throughout this Chamber and throughout this Congress?

This is not the Kendrick Meek-Tim Ryan report. Just pick up *Newsweek*, *Time*, the *Washington Post*, the *Washington Times*. You can pick up the *Miami Herald*, the *Chicago Sun*. Pick up any paper you want to pick up, and there is no secret that there is a culture of corruption and cronyism and incompetence.

Let me just say this: it means more, it means more to the American taxpayer, the people that are paying taxes every day, when they have to pay more because of certain special interests having worked their way into getting sweetheart deals from this Congress. It hurts, because we are here to represent those individuals that have sent us here to represent them.

Mr. RYAN, you have heard me say this once before, and I will say it again: the American people, all of them, just about all of them that participate in the electoral process, woke up early, Mr. Speaker, one Tuesday morning, 7 a.m. in some cases, to cast their ballot for representation in the U.S. Congress. They didn't cast their ballot for a K Street project. They didn't cast their ballot for a corporation who is running an operation here on K Street for some sort of agreement which was not an open agreement.

Mr. RYAN, I just started to think about this K Street Project, and I can't help but think about what is going on now that we don't know about similar to a K Street Project. K Street was fine a couple of months ago. Now it is not fine.

Let me just talk a little bit about the whole K Street piece and make sure the Members don't get amnesia as it relates to the K Street Project.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Shakedown Street.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. You call Shakedown Street. The deal was, and I am not talking about the deal with cards, the deal was, and may still be, as far as we know, is that corporations and special interests had to hire, okay, quote-unquote, former staffers from the Republican side to work in their corporation. The leadership of those lobbying groups had to be a Republican person that was trusted by certain Members and certain former Members of the majority. So that was the deal. You do that, and then you have to make sure that we have a line of communications, because we are in this thing together.

I can tell you it has resulted in a lack of health care policy. And now the President is talking about health savings plans, which is very interesting, because we already have something similar and it is not working, Mr. RYAN. Higher prescription drug costs, okay? Not allowing us to negotiate with drug companies.

I must say, Mr. RYAN, I don't blame the industry. I don't blame the industry. I don't want to walk around here and say "you bad industry." You made us, or you made the majority.

No. The majority voted for it, and that is what happened. The bottom line is that it wasn't these special interest groups that voted to have Members of Congress. They didn't go to the polls. I didn't see a special interest group say, well, I am going to go to the poll and vote for this Congressman because they are going to serve me when they get to Washington. No, an individual American did that. I think it is important that we realize what is going on here.

So now we have the majority saying we are going to disband the K Street Project. Well, it was wrong from the beginning, Mr. RYAN, and they all knew it, and we knew it. We talked about it.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. It has been wrong for 10 or 12 years now.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. It has been wrong for a number of years. Guess what, Mr. RYAN? We came to the floor definitely within the last 2 years and since the creation of the 30-Something Working Group and brought this to the attention of the Members that this is wrong. You even called it Shakedown Street. We didn't even want to call it K Street, because it promoted too much.

People laughed in their offices at us saying, look at them on the floor. They are talking about it. We are in control. This is no biggie.

One article that I read, one Member that will go unnamed at this moment, we all know, had a little booking office. If you were not in the book, you did not get to see me, or that particular Member.

So I think it is important, Mr. RYAN, that we make sure that Americans know and the American people know, no matter where they live, that under a Democratic-controlled Congress, and this is the message to the Members and the majority, because there are some Members in the majority that feel the way we feel, Mr. RYAN, but, unfortunately, the majority of the majority doesn't feel that way.

So maybe we can have a paradigm shift as we start working on this job interview that you mentioned, which we call in broader terms an "aka election day," that hopefully there be a paradigm shift where these Members will say, you know, I think it is important that we work in a bipartisan way to benefit Americans, and I think it is important that we make sure that the American people feel they are getting their vote worth out of this Congress, versus a K Street Project or Shakedown Street.

So, Mr. RYAN, I am glad to report that we, the Democrats, have worked very hard in making sure that we bring this honest leadership to this Chamber and to this institution to benefit the American people. It is nothing against certain individuals and Members that have made bad decisions. That is what they have to deal with individually, okay?

But when it deals with the overall function of this House, and I am so glad in our legislation that we have, Mr. RYAN, on the Democratic side, that we are doing away with those in-the-dead-of-the-night special interest votes while Americans are sleeping because they got to go to work in the morning and punch in and work with very little health care benefits; that at 2 am and 3 o'clock in the morning their Congress, their House of Representatives, took their vote, took their confidence, and gave it to the special interests.

We are saying we want to disabuse this Chamber of doing that, we are saying we have a plan to do it, and we are saying that we have been amplifying this kind of what some may say is illegal activity that has been taking place in so many different areas and what has been reported in the media, we have been reporting this.

Mr. RYAN, I would feel uncomfortable saying what I am saying right now on the floor of the House of Representatives if we hadn't been saying it for months and months and months. Finally there is validation that is happening, that it was happening, and that it is time for a change and it is time for us to make sure that this country gets its votes worth out of this Congress.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I agree. Not only the culture that you talked about, let's talk about what the cost is. Let's connect the dots. Let's talk about what happens here.

We talked about the Health Savings Accounts. This is the President's idea to solve the health care problem, and it allows individuals to take money, extra money that they have at the end of the month, spare money, and put it in a side account.

Well, that is great if you have got spare money at the end of the month to put in a side account. We have millions and millions of people in this country who do not have that extra money to put in a side health care savings account to address the health care issue, so there is going to be millions and millions of people.

I am not saying it is a bad idea. Maybe it is a good idea for those people who have money and they can set it aside. Great. But the vast majority of the people who live in this country do not have the luxury of having an extra \$500 at the end of the month to put in a side account.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Forty-six million.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Forty-six million don't have anything now, and millions of others can't afford it, or can barely

afford what they have. So our goal on the Democratic side is to figure out how to reduce the cost of health care. And we tried to do that, Mr. MEEK, when we had the prescription drug bill here.

The Democrats, this bill started out at \$400 billion, and later after the vote we found out it was \$700 billion. But all the seniors that are out there, Mr. MEEK, will qualify for this, \$700 billion worth.

What the Democrats wanted to do to save the taxpayer money, to be accountable for the money that we spend here, the Democrats wanted to put two provisions on to that Medicare part D, the prescription drug bill.

We wanted to allow the Secretary of Health and Human Services to be able to negotiate down the drug price on behalf of all the Medicare recipients. We didn't want to create a new program, a new bureaucracy. We just wanted to give the Secretary of HHS the ability to go to Pfizer and negotiate down the drug price. You want the Medicare contract? Fine. We got to talk price. Knock 15 to 20 percent off the cost and we will give it to you. Boom, we save money, Democrats. That is our idea. The Republican majority shot it down in the dead of night.

The other idea, we wanted to allow for reimportation of pharmaceuticals, to allow these prescription drugs to come in from Canada to create real competition in the pharmaceutical industry in the United States and drive down the cost. We would save the taxpayer money, we would lower the cost of prescription drugs, and maybe we could start reducing our deficit and eventually make some investments in the education and research and development and other things.

The cost of the pharmaceutical industry giving the Republicans \$100 million is higher drug prices for average Americans and the taxpayers not getting their money spent wisely because there is not the accountability here that we need.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Well, it is interesting, Mr. RYAN, that when you started talking about health care, I think it is important that we have plans to cut health care costs. We also want to reduce the number of the uninsured and provide tax credits for health insurance for small businesses.

Mr. RYAN, there are a number of small businesses in my district that say, you know something, Congressman? I would like to offer a real health care plan to my employees, Mr. Speaker, but they can't. They can't do it because they, A, cannot afford it, and, B, the insurance is too high.

Even when you have insurance, you may call it insurance, but the premiums are too high. Also making sure we allow patients to buy into a CHIPA program, and also allow Americans age 55 to 64 to buy Medicare, and also provide proposals to bring down the cost of prescription drugs.

Mr. Speaker, the President mentioned nothing, absolutely nothing,

you can check the speech on the White House Web site, nothing on prescription drugs, nada, even though we have seniors throughout the country trying to figure out where is the cost savings in the bill that was passed are. I mean, absolutely nothing. I can see at least like one little word. "Well, I want to address this." Just one line. Nowhere in the speech.

So the American people know as far as the majority, the Republican majority, you have the Republican U.S. House of Representatives looking forward to the status quo. If you are happy with the status quo right now, I think you need to stick with it. If you are not happy and are concerned, like many millions of Americans are, I think you need to be able to put that on that interview you have with your Member of Congress.

□ 2015

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Can I ask a question? I thought of this last night as I was sitting right over there as the President was giving his speech. It is almost amazing to me, I think, that the speech that was given here last night was dealing with the same issues that we were dealing with today.

Last night the President was talking about investing in education and research and development, and we are going to make these great investments. We came here today and did this Budget Deficit Reduction Act that actually increases the deficit, and we are cutting education, we are cutting the investments. So that was kind of perplexing to me.

But I was over there listening to him talk about energy independence and how we are addicted to oil. And I thought, wow, he actually said it, which I thought was great. It is a big first step to admit that there is a problem. So maybe it has taken 5 years, but we have now admitted, the administration has now admitted that we have a problem.

And then I was waiting for, you know, all right, this is it. And he says, and we are going to reduce our dependence on foreign oil by 75 percent by 2025. And I thought, my goodness gracious, we went to the Moon in 10 years. Where is the urgency?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. The European markets when they opened, they said ha. You know, they were concerned because before the speech it was all of this talk about what he was going to say. But they did not even respond to what the President said, because they did not even take him seriously.

So I think it is important that we understand, that the Members understand, it is not about the President of the United States. It is about what this House is going to do on behalf of the American people. That is what it is about.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. That is exactly it, what do we do day in and day out to improve the lives and improve the position politically of our country? And

the Democratic idea is to get our idea to become self-sufficient, self-sustaining with energy in the next 10 years. And you cannot tell me that if we marshall all of the intelligence and the wealth of this country that we cannot do it in the next decade.

As I said, we went to the Moon in a decade. And look at not only the economic impact that we would have in this country, the jobs that would be created with ethanol and biodiesel, and all of the hydrogen engines and hybrid cars and all of these things that we could create an economy back in the United States that we are actually producing, which I think is very positive, but let me make this final point.

Imagine the political position the United States would be in, the Secretary of State would be in, if we told all of those oil producing countries we are done. We do not need you. We do not want you. We will deal with you and help you along the way, but we are not tied to you. We are not addicted to your oil. So we do not need to get in all of this international political stuff that we have been getting in for the last 30 years.

It has been nothing but bad for the United States, to be in these different countries playing with their internal politics and puppeteering who is coming in and who is going out, and Saddam Hussein needs to be here because he is a Sunni, and we have got the Shias in Iran. Hey, we are going to take care of home first.

A stronger America begins at home. And the Democratic idea is to take the resources of this country, the intelligence of this country, and become energy independent in the next 10 years. And no one can convenience me that it cannot happen.

Got a chart. And this chart is the gasoline prices and oil company profits. The bars, the grey bars are the profits starting in 2002. And as you can see, every year 2003, 2004, 2005 the profits have skyrocketed.

And look what happens to the price of gas. It has gone up as well. So the profits go up, the cost goes up. Unbelievable. These people continue to make money off a basic resource that everyone is dependent on.

That is why we got to get away from this. Exxon, I think it was Exxon that made \$36 billion dollars in their last quarter. \$80,000 per minute. Come on. It is time for the Democratic ideas to take center stage in this country.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. RYAN, as you know, we believe in making sure that we share with the Members that we are prepared, we are ready and able to lead. And we are going to present a case every time we get an opportunity to have the Republicans join the debate on some of our ideas. We are willing to even share some of our ideas with the majority.

And we have offered procedurally to the Republicans our ideas, but since we are not a part of the legislative writing, the legislative creating, the legislative process here, where we have

folks outside of this process that are unelected that have more input than our caucus on a piece of legislation of significance to the American people, we have to make sure that we share our case.

I want to make sure, I want to make sure that the Members on the majority side know that they can go to www.democrats.gov and pull up our innovation agenda, Mr. RYAN, pull up our innovation agenda.

And this is just the executive summary of it on how we are talking about how we are going to make America better, how we are going to find alternative energy, how we are going to make sure that our next generation is ready to lead the world, not the United States, but the world. How we are not going to leave our young people behind, how we are going to invest in technology so that we do not have to come up with special visa programs.

Let me just break that down. Special passports or credentials from foreign countries because we do not have the know-how here in our country to do what we need to do as a country, and to continue to stay the superpower of the world. If we continue on this track, we are going to have some real financial issues, Mr. RYAN, that you mentioned earlier. And we are going to have a brain drain, because we have some folks that are more interested on the majority side on giving special deals to the special interests.

I also want to add, and you mentioned this, and I just want to refer to my notes, but I want to make sure that we are crystal clear, and that everyone understands what we are saying here.

We have an energy independence plan within 10 years, like Mr. RYAN said with new investments and clean energy and technology, calling for the repeal of the \$8 billion subsidy to the oil companies, and use it for consumer relief.

Now, I think that is important. We are going to take \$8 billion from the special interests. This is our plan. \$8 billion. This is not a new program like they like to say, this is taking away from the special interest programs, Mr. RYAN, our friends who you made mention of, record profits, all of the way up. I know you mentioned Exxon and Mobil, but there are a number of other companies taking the cookies from them because they are making money.

I mean, it is not like, you know, a small business would love to say, well, you know, I made money this year, but I do not even have to spend my money to invest in future profits. I will just spend the taxpayers' money to invest in my own profits and to my stockholders.

So folks want to talk about fiscal responsibility, I think it is important that we understand that there are people working out there that are paying more for heating oil and fuel and LP gas than at any other time in history of this country.

But meanwhile the corporations that are able, that are a part of the legisla-

tive process here in this Congress, Mr. Speaker, and a part of writing legislation over in the White House as we have read reports on, they are getting what they want. What about the folks that woke up early one Tuesday morning to vote for representation? So there is a clear choice. Just like we were talking about the K Street Project for 2 years, 24 months.

One member of the K Street project, a substantial member on the Republican side admitted guilt, willing to, you know, okay, go spend some time in jail. It was all right. And then when he did that, then all of a sudden the K Street Project, it is not good. We need to do away with it. We have been saying that on the Democratic side for a long time.

It was not only working toward the demise of bipartisanship here in this House of Representative, it was working toward the demise of the American spirit. And making sure democracy rings, and making sure that every individual received the just-due representation that they voted for, not the just-due representation of the special interests, the just-due representation of what they voted for.

Yes, Members, it is painful. It is very painful, Mr. Speaker, to come to the floor and speak truths. But I think it is important that Republicans, Independents, Democrats, Green Party, you name it, Reform Party know exactly what is going on under the Capitol dome.

We were not sent here to be cozy-cozy and buddy-buddy and allow this country or the leadership of this country to in many ways turn their back on future generations and this generation.

You mentioned today, the budget once again passed by 1 or 2 votes, passed by 2 votes today. That cut substantially student loans and student opportunities to our young people, but better yet, the President stood up here last night around this time, or last night, an hour from when we are talking now, and said we believe in innovation, we believe in making sure, because, you know, what the President saw our plan and saw that we were talking about, our plan, and heard about our town meetings, that we were having as Democrats, about our plan on innovation.

So he decided to talk about it. But he is talking the talk but he is not walking the walk. It is not in his budget. It was not in his budget last year. And the action by the House today, by the majority that voted to set back the clock on so many Americans that work every day. Parents work every day, Mr. Speaker. They pay taxes every day.

I mean they pay the highest taxes because, guess what, they do not get the big breaks like special interests get. And yet we made their job even harder today in making sure that they educate their children.

So, Mr. RYAN, I would be uncomfortable in saying what they have been saying, and saying what we have not

been saying for a very long time. I want to remind the Members once again that if we were in the majority, when I say we, I am talking about the Democrats, there would not be a lot of talk about what we should do or we could do, it will be the fact that we are doing, and that we are working on behalf of everyday Americans, and if they are a police officer, a teacher, a person mopping up the floor at a hotel on the midnight shift, they are retired, they are trying to figure out how they are going to make ends meet, or if that they have reached the American dream, had a small business, it is now a big business and providing jobs to everyday Americans, and making sure that they are equally represented. It would not be a question.

Mr. Speaker, it would not be a question, and we would not even have to talk about bipartisanship, because we would have bipartisanship, because that is what we are supposed to do in this House, and what the American people voted us in and expect from us to do is to work together, not only on naming post offices and bridges like we do to Americans that deserve it, I am not belittling that process.

We all bring legislation here to honor our constituents and Americans that have served our local communities. We all vote for it, with a few exceptions, but on issues such as health care, on issues such as tax reform, on issues such as the rights and body armor for our troops, we should be united on that. It would not be a question if we could or we would, we would be doing it.

So that is the programs that we make from this side, Mr. RYAN. And guess what? We have history to prove that we work in a bipartisan nature. So when you talk about election time in November, and you talking about the fact that people will be coming forward, the American people in an interview, as though they are applying for their job once again, or we say an evaluation, when they sit down to that evaluation, we want to make sure that the Members know exactly what the American people, the kind of questions they are going to be asking or what kind of action they will be taking.

□ 2030

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Absolutely. I think you make several very, very good points, and what we are trying to communicate here is that we have better ideas and we want to take the country in a new direction. If you are perfectly comfortable with the way everything is right now, then you probably do not want to vote for Democrats, but if you are having some trouble and you think the country is maybe going in the wrong direction, just listen to what we are talking about and how we are going to actually implement our plan.

We have figured out in the past 10 years that we have not always made the best argument, we have not always presented ourselves in the best way. We

allowed our Republican friends to define us, and as they defined us, they continued to win elections. But over the past few years, 4 years, 5 years in particular, they have defined themselves through their actions, and we now have the ideas and the commitment and the energy to take this country in a new direction and maybe we needed that time to learn. Maybe we needed that time to figure out exactly what needed to be done, but we are talking about, on the Democratic side, making sure that every household has broadband access in the next 5 years, that the country is energy independent in the next 10 years, by taking some of the savings that we will generate through the prescription drug program, by doing a couple of the things I talked about earlier by saving money, by making government run more efficiently and not being afraid quite frankly to ask Bill Gates to pay his fair share in taxes.

The President said again last night, make the tax cuts permanent. I will agree with a part of it, making the middle class tax cuts permanent, but let us ask these people who have been making money hand over fist over the past 10 years, we need your help. You think we want to ask you for more money? You think we like it? No, but we need you to help us. The country is running a \$500 billion deficit. We could either ask you for it or we could borrow it from the Chinese, which is what we are doing now.

So if we ask you for it, we get it and we hopefully balance our budget, lower interest rates, and that will lead to economic growth. Right now, we are borrowing the money because the Republican majority does not have the guts to ask the wealthiest people in the country for money, and we are borrowing it from the Chinese.

It is that simple. We are not making this up. This is not a complicated process. We are spending \$500 billion more than we are taking in. So we have got to get it from somewhere, and if you run a deficit at home, you go to the bank and you borrow it and they charge you interest. That is what we are doing right now. We are borrowing money from the Chinese bank, the Japanese bank, and we are paying interest on it, and that is money that we cannot invest, that interest payment. We cannot invest that into education.

I told this story earlier on the floor as we were debating the budget reconciliation, and it really hit me. I had a meeting last week with a school board member from Youngstown, Ohio, Youngstown City Schools, and I asked him as we were sitting there what is the poverty rate for these kids that go to Youngstown City Schools, a pretty simple question. Ninety percent of the kids of the 8,000 kids that go to Youngstown City Schools live in poverty. I do not even know why I asked him because it does not really make sense to ask this question, I asked how many qualify for the free and reduced

lunch. He said we do not even pass out the form anymore because so many kids qualify, it is more expensive to administer the program by passing things out and trying to figure out who we can give it to than it is to just give it to everybody in the school. Can you imagine that?

What we are saying here is that these budget deficits and these tax cuts and these cuts to education and this not funding the No Child Left Behind and not funding Medicaid, which provides health care for those kids, by not funding those programs, these kids do not have a chance. We will have certain kids that pop up and they go against the odds to be successful, but these kids do not have the opportunity that every single American should have.

What the Democrats are saying is that we want an opportunity because you know why? I will sit here for 10 hours. I have 12 years of Catholic school in me. I could make every moral argument for doing that that is necessary in the book and in the good book, how many times Christ talked about helping the poor and poverty. We could make all those arguments, but let us set them aside.

How are we going to compete with 1.3 billion Chinese workers, 1 billion workers that live in the country of India, the massive advancements that are going on in Ireland and Israel and some of these other countries? How are we going to compete if we have a school district and 90 percent of the kids live in poverty? We need those kids to be on the field with all of us competing in a global economy, as mathematicians, scientists, chemists, engineers, computer programmers, entrepreneurs, artists and musicians. We need them on the field. We do not need them in a cycle of poverty.

If this Republican leadership, if they do not have any new ideas, then give us control. Give us the keys to the car because that kid should have access to broadband. That kid should have three square meals a day. That kid should have art programs after school and should have the opportunity to play in an intramural league after school.

That is how we are going to move the country forward. We are stagnant right now because we are not investing in kids, and Katrina took the veil off this. We all drive around, go through the suburbs and try to do our thing, go around these outer belts and try to stay away from that. Katrina took the veil off that, and I think that that is not only a moral issue, it is an economic issue that needs to be addressed.

We have plan after plan after plan after plan to fix that. The Democrats have ideas, and we just need the opportunity to implement them.

I did not mean to get all worked up, but I tell you, when I think of 8,000 kids in my district and there is more because I also represent a lot of other school districts, living in poverty and not having the kind of opportunity that they should have because they are

born on this soil here. It gets frustrating.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. If you are not passionate, if you did not have a special place in your heart and your mind, then something would be really wrong. You are one of the Members of Congress that knew and appreciate what it meant when someone or a constituent of yours went to go vote for representation. That is what they voted for. They voted for someone that was willing to stand up for them, even if they get strange looks by certain Members the next day or right after we leave the floor.

That is what this thing is about. That is the reason why we serve. That is why we make sacrifices, to be here on this floor after everyone else has gone home and flipping cable channels saying, well, you know, today I have done my part.

We still have an America out there that is suffering, and I am not talking necessarily about poor people. I am talking about folks that work every day. I am talking about small businesses trying to figure out how they are going to control their health insurance costs. I am talking about victims of natural disasters in our Nation. I am talking about families of troops, men and women in harm's way, that are concerned about their loved ones and the lack of vision and leadership and direction that we are not providing and sending the signals to other governments and taking the training wheels off of them and saying now, listen, there has to be an end or a strategy to bringing our men and women home and saving the U.S. taxpayer money. That can be accomplished and protect America at the same time.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that we speak truth to power when we talk about those kinds of things because you cannot let statements just float saying that we just stay as long as we have to stay. What does that mean? Stay the course, what does that mean? It is not giving the very men and women that have sand in their teeth as we are speaking here on this floor a piece of mind on our vision as a Congress and as a White House. I think that is important.

The reason why you were speaking so passionately, I just want to reflect on tax cuts. As we start talking about them, I can tell you right now I was in the State legislator, Mr. Speaker. I voted for a number of tax cuts. Yes, I did, for people that worked every day, for small businesses that were trying to make a way out of no way, helping them achieve the American dream, even for some large businesses that wanted to create more jobs. I did it. I did even a hearing in this House as it relates to tax cuts for middle class families, and so did a number of colleagues on this side even had proposals that would help small businesses more than the majority proposals would help small businesses or recommended helping small businesses.

I think it is important for us to look at when we talk about tax cuts and urge the Congress to make the tax cuts permanent, okay, well, let us break that down. Let us put that in English. That is another theme. That is a slogan. That is an old Burger King theme, have it your way. There are a couple of other themes that are out there: Stop by, we leave the lights on. Those are themes. Those are slogans. That is a marketing campaign. That is not governance. Let us just share this for a moment.

Let me just translate for the President. What he is talking about, and the majority of the House of Representatives is talking about, the extension of capital gains and dividend tax breaks were provided to the top 1 percent tax cuts up to \$14,361 in 2010. Meanwhile, using the same timeline, middle class, low-income families would only get \$41. I can tell you, either everyone in America has to be part of the top 1 percent to enjoy the majority's vision on the Republican side or else. That is it. Either you pull yourself up by your bootstraps, Republicans, Democrats, Independents, Green Party and Reform Party members, or you get the \$41. That is just where it is. You get what kind of tax cut? \$41. It almost costs \$41 to prepare your taxes. So the tax guy takes that right off the top. You do not even see that. It is just enough to prepare your taxes and report to this government.

I think it is important that we break this thing down for the American people, that they understand exactly what is going on and that we let the majority side, as we did with the K Street project, as we talked about the Republican culture of corruption and cronyism and incompetence, I cannot say it enough because there is no better vindication than being right.

I tell you, some people wait years. Some folks say, well, maybe 10 years from now they will realize what this Republican majority has embraced as doing business in Washington, D.C., but there is a higher power that will reveal to his people what is going on in this government that has he ordained. You say you have 12 years of Catholic school. I have got about forty-some years of Mount Table Missionary Baptist Church in me, and I have been in the neighborhood where when folks pray hard, they pray hard. I have been in street revivals. I have seen evangelists on television. I have seen them under a tent, but the bottom line is whether it be Christian or a Jewish person or a Muslim, I am going to tell you right now, regardless of what one's faith is, right is right and wrong is wrong.

I would tell you, if we make things permanent and totally lock in middle America, poor people in this country into what the President is talking about, we better all try to be part of the 1 percent because if you are not, you are going to get shortchanged. Not only are you going to get short-

changed, your child is not going to have the education dollars that they need to even prepare themselves to be a part of the 1 percent. That is where it comes down to.

Members need to understand that the American people are going to have to make a choice, and they will make a choice in the coming months. You said it and I will say it again. We are ready, prepared, we have our chin strap buckled, Super Bowl coming up, to lead, not next year but right now. If the majority side wants to have a paradigm shift and say that we want a bipartisan working group on making sure that we do things the way we are supposed to do it here, then, fine, we can get to work now.

□ 2045

But as long as the Republican majority feels that they need to hold us down, Mr. RYAN: oh, we got to keep those Democratic ideas down; oh, we have to procedurally not allow them to bring ideas to the floor; oh, we need to gavel them down in committee when they try to present these ideas because we don't want our Members to vote for them because they may be judged by their constituents, I can tell you, and I am so glad I thought of this, Mr. RYAN, and I know you have the next hour, but let me just say this real quickly.

A perfect example: vindication within our lifetime is wonderful, within our political lifetime of the 109th Congress. Social Security. The President last night said, Well, you know, we have to work on Social Security. Well, the Congress stopped the President and the majority side from the privatization of Social Security last year.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Democrats.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Democrats. Democrats. And Mr. RYAN, in the 30-somethings we like to tell the truth, so a few Republicans, just a few in this House, stopped the Republican majority. And guess what? And everyday-working Americans, Mr. RYAN. The millions of Americans that wrote their Members of Congress.

But on the Democratic side we had hundreds of town hall meetings informing Americans about what this Congress was going to do to them on behalf of special interests. The only guarantee was special interests were going to get their money off the top and their benefits were going to go down.

But, guess what? Now the President is saying that because it takes a little blood and fire in this thing, oh, maybe we can put together another, and another, I think it is the fourth or fifth so-called bipartisan commission to look at Social Security.

I'm going to tell you, Mr. RYAN, the only way we fight, the only way we win as Americans against special interests, coupled with the majority side, is by fire and through commitment and the American spirit.

I must say that I am very excited about the fact that we have energized Members on this side of the aisle that

are not willing to take it. Now, I'm saying some people might say take it any more, but we never took it. We are making sure we bring the fight to the majority side. If they want to work against the will of everyday American people, we are going to give the American people the voice. Even if they are Republicans, even if they are Independents, even if they are part of the Reform Party, they are Americans. We have been federalized to represent them, and they will receive their representation.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. I appreciate that, my good friend from Florida. We are about to wrap up, and I think what we are saying is, we want a chance. We want an opportunity to lead this country. As we close here, Mr. MEEK, I just want to say that our caucus had an election today.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. I have already mentioned it.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Have you?

Mr. MEEK of Florida. But go ahead.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Well, I just wanted to personally congratulate JOHN LARSON of Connecticut, who is our new vice-chair of the Democratic Caucus. We had a great race. It is sometimes difficult within the caucus. JAN SCHAKOWSKY from Illinois and JOE CROWLEY from New York both ran great races, both great members of our caucus. But this was something that really got everybody's juices flowing and ready for the next year.

I want to give our e-mail address out. 30-somethingdems@mail.house.gov, so the Members can give us a holler, if they want to. That is 30, the number, somethingdems@mail.house.gov. Send us your e-mails and let us know what you think. You can go to the leader's Web site and find out about our innovation agenda; you can find out about what the Democratic plan is to lead this country in the next few years and in the next few decades. It is exciting stuff, it really is, and I am proud to be a part of it. I want to thank Leader PELOSI and STENY HOYER and Mr. CLYBURN as well.

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Thank you, Mr. RYAN, for joining us. We are going to spare the great staff here in the Chamber. It was a long night last night. We are going to call it a night with this hour. We will not take our second hour. We want to once again thank the Democratic leadership for allowing us to have this hour, Mr. Speaker.

CORRECTION TO THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD OF TUESDAY, JANUARY 31, 2006, AT PAGE H5

JOINT SESSION OF THE CONGRESS—STATE OF THE UNION MESSAGE

The SPEAKER laid before the House the following privileged Senate concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 77) to provide for a joint session of Congress to